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SUBJECT: DAS KRAMER'S JULY 20 MTG WITH ELYSEE RUSSIA ADVISOR

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT FOR REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a July 20 meeting, Damien Loras, the Presidency's diplomatic advisor for the Americas, Russia, Central Asia, and non-EU Europe, including the Balkans, told DAS Kramer that France would recognize Kosovo's independence at the conclusion of renewed negotiations. Loras stated that a credible process was necessary in order to garner more EU unity. Kramer explained U.S. concerns about Russian actions on Abkhazia and defense issues, suggesting that quiet high level diplomacy was imperative. Loras agreed and expressed the GOF hope that a resolution to the current CFE crisis could be found before Russian suspension took effect. Both interlocutors suggested that a proposed G-7 meeting at the Political Director level could effectively demonstrate to the Russians that their actions were not without consequences.  
END SUMMARY

KOSOVO

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12. (C) Loras noted that, despite current failure to obtain a UNSCR on Kosovo, the process had been vital to showing EU partners that the Quint had made a serious effort to engage Russia. More EU unity had been the result. Loras commented that although France did not expect much from new negotiations between the parties, the process itself was again key to obtaining more EU support for the UDI that would follow. "We (the GOF) are committed to recognizing Kosovo's independence after negotiations," Loras stated.

13. (C) Sarkozy had a positive conversation with Putin about a UNSCR a week before the resolution went into blue, Loras told us. Putin seemed to agree that as long as the proposed UNSCR did not implicitly recognize Kosovar independence, there was no need for Russia to insist that the resolution exclude the possibility. Despite this conversation, FM Lavrov and others, however, had refused to compromise. Indeed, Russia's intentions had become clearer as negotiations over the UNSCR continued. Loras wondered whether a single-sentence resolution on 1244 might have been preferable -- a Russian veto could have therefore implicitly ended the mission.

14. (C) Loras and Kramer agreed that the U.S., together with the Quint, needed to make the Kosovars understand that patience would bring its rewards. For its part, Loras said, Serbia needed to be convinced that its future in the Euro-Atlantic community would ultimately be affected by the way it conducts itself. Kramer noted that the Kosovo process should be finalized before a new Russian president was elected; otherwise we risked putting the new President in a difficult position as well as beginning the relationship on a

very sour note.

#### RUSSIA AND ABKHAZIA

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15. (C) The U.S. believes Russia's threat to recognize Abkhazia's independence is credible, Kramer explained. Increased Russian rhetoric, moreover, had put Moscow's credibility on the line and made it more difficult for the Russians to withdraw their threat. Loras agreed with Kramer's assertion that quiet, high-level diplomacy was needed now in order to discourage Russia from following a dangerous path. Kramer suggested raising several issues related to Russia's possible unilateral recognition of Abkhazia: the success of the Sochi Olympics; the stability of the North Caucasus; and the credibility of Russia's future role in the Abkhaz peace process.

#### RUSSIA AND DEFENSE ISSUES

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16. (C) Kramer explained that the U.S. would continue to move forward with Poland and the Czech Republic on missile defense installations, while simultaneously pursuing with the Russians ideas on the Gabala radar site in Azerbaijan and the Armavir site in southern Russia; these were not mutually exclusive options. Russian DFM Kislyak would be in Washington the end of the month for discussions on this issue. Kramer told Loras that Russia did not share the U.S. threat assessment of Iran and could not accept that Russia was only an incidental player in our efforts to confront a potential Iranian threat. Loras agreed with Kramer's

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analysis of Russia's psyche, but noted that the Russians had been constructive on Iran issues, particularly at the G8 and the UNSC. He suggested that Russia's analysis of the Iranian threat was not yet clear.

17. (C) France hoped that some progress could be made on CFE before the Russian suspension went into effect in December, Loras told Kramer. The Russians, he said, had proposed that some movement towards the adoption of the adapted CFE Treaty could stop the impending suspension. Loras questioned whether some of the Baltic states could sign, but not ratify the treaty, as a sign of constructive engagement to Russia. Kramer insisted that any movement from the U.S. and Europe had to come in concert with a Russian step in the right direction. We planned to discuss CFE with Kislyak as well, and we hoped to have a better sense of any Russian flexibility on CFE and its willingness to fulfill its Istanbul commitments. (COMMENT: It was clear that Loras was looking to appease Russia in some way, but he avoided questioning the substance of the Istanbul commitments and the need for Russia to implement them. He stressed, instead, the need for creative solutions.)

#### RUSSIA AND THE UK

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18. (C) The GOF had publicly supported the UK on its recent diplomatic row with Russia, Loras said, but was disappointed that the British did not appear to have a strategy. Fortunately, he said, the Russian response thus far had been proportional. Both agreed, however, that the deeper issue was more serious and called into question whether it was possible to have common values with Putin's administration.

#### A G-7 MEETING ?

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19. (C) Loras expressed his support for a proposed G-7 meeting at the Political Director level that would exclude Russia. Kramer agreed that Russia had to understand that there were consequences to its actions and that such a meeting would

send an appropriate signal. Loras surmised that the other G-7 would attend if invited.

¶10. (U) This cable has been cleared with DAS Kramer.

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